

Consensus

Volume 29

Issue 2 *Leavening the Lump*

Article 9

11-11-2004

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Nancy Vernon Kelly

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Nancy Vernon (2004) "Crying Out for the Resurrection of our Lives," *Consensus*: Vol. 29 : Iss. 2 , Article 9.
Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol29/iss2/9>

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Crying Out For The Resurrection Of Our Lives

Nancy Vernon Kelly

*Pastor, St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Kitchener, Ontario*

Text: Mark 16:1-8

(B - The Resurrection of Our Lord)

Maybe it seems like a funny place to plant the seed for thinking about resurrection — but this is what happened to me. I was sitting in a science class at California State University, Los Angeles: “Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech Mechanism.” Sounds like a boring course ... and it was a boring course. Dr. Marian Matsuda was lecturing away about breathing and how a baby’s first breath is always an *in* breath — an inspiration that fills the baby’s lungs up with air for the first time. And how a person’s final breath is always an *out* breath — a sort of sigh, followed by silence.

In those years I had already experienced the holy moment when my daughters Jana and Sara were born. Perhaps you, like I, have been touched by the awe of the first breathing *in* followed by a cry. But it was some years before I first witnessed the holy moment of death — the final breathing *out* followed by silence.

Well, Good Friday was a breathing *out* day, a day for sighing followed by silence.

Today is an entirely different kind of day. Easter is a breathing *in* day, a day for inspiration followed by a newborn cry that announces, “I’m alive!”; the first breath *in* after what was supposed to be the last breath *out*; a filling up with inspiration after the cruelty that was supposed to put an end to all inspiration.

In our Communion prayers in one of our new liturgies are these beautiful words — have you heard them? “We cry out for the resurrection of our lives.” When Dr. Matsuda was talking about breathing, I don’t remember her ever mentioning anything about the resurrection of our lives. She just told us the part about the first breath *in* and the final breath *out*, and about how throughout our lives we speak and sing and whisper and shout on all the *out* breaths in between. Maybe Dr. Matsuda didn’t know about the first breath *in*

that comes after the final breath *out*. Maybe Dr. Matsuda didn't know about the resurrection of our lives.

And although I regularly confess with enthusiasm that I believe in the resurrection of the dead ("I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.") I really don't know very much about resurrection, either. Resurrection is more something I long for than something I learned about in science class — something in the realm of trust, in the realm of mystery, in the realm of mercy.

Yet something I *do* know about is *crying out for the resurrection of our lives*. That's familiar territory. And I wonder if you, too, couldn't say that you know a fair amount about what it means to *cry out* for one more in breath *in* a time of sighing ... to cry out for renewed inspiration in a time of no inspiration ... to cry out for life in the middle of death?

Once a very old woman in a nursing home was talking with me about the meaning of life in general and about the meaning of her own ancient life in particular — a life of increasing dependency and diminishing possibilities. A life of sighing. And she was wondering what possible use she could be, trapped there, as she was, in a wheelchair on the top floor of a nursing home.

She remembered the evening she was wheeling herself back from the dining room and noticed another resident who was lined up against the wall strapped in a wheelchair. She saw that resident there day after day with the same blank-faced, deadened look.

And one particular day she just reached out and patted that person's hand. Out of the blue. Didn't stop to think about it. And as soon as she did that, that resident suddenly came alive and reached out and grabbed hold of her hand so tightly it nearly broke.

We cry out for the resurrection of our lives ... for the resurrection of our own lives ... for the resurrection of each other's lives.

Part of what gives me strength to keep crying out for the resurrection of our lives is this little group of women living on the edge of society who go to the tomb on the third day expecting to anoint their friend's body. Mary Magdalene. Mary. Salome. There in the early morning they go to the tomb, find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

They are not brave women. I doubt they've slept well or eaten well for the past week. And when they discover the empty tomb, it's not a surge of joy but a surge of terror that grabs them. Far beyond

anything they can understand except by faith, *Jesus takes his first in breath after what was supposed to be his last **out** breath. His lungs fill up with air. A birth cry bursts from his lips.*

When the women see the tomb empty, I wonder: Do they begin to cry out for the resurrection of their lives?

Could it be that **our crying out** is really **the beginning** of the resurrection of our lives? When we cry out in grief and suffering, when we cry out for healing and wholeness, when we cry out for the work of justice and the healing of creation, when we cry out for mercy and kindness for ourselves and for others who are broken by the world, when we cry out with longing and with sighing, when we cry out for the resurrection of our lives ... *could it be that the resurrection of our lives is closer than we think?*

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

The first of these is the fact that the world is not a uniform whole. It is a complex of many different parts, each with its own characteristics and needs. This complexity is reflected in the diversity of human cultures, languages, and customs. It is also reflected in the variety of natural resources and environments that we inhabit. The second point is that the world is not static. It is constantly changing, and these changes are often rapid and unpredictable. This is due to a number of factors, including technological advances, demographic shifts, and environmental changes. The third point is that the world is not a single entity. It is made up of many different groups and individuals, each with their own interests and goals. This diversity of interests and goals is a source of both strength and conflict. The fourth point is that the world is not a simple system. It is a complex web of interactions and relationships, and it is difficult to understand or predict its behavior. The fifth point is that the world is not a neutral space. It is a place where power is exercised, and where different groups and individuals are vying for control. The sixth point is that the world is not a single story. It is a place where many different stories are being told, and where these stories are often in conflict with each other. The seventh point is that the world is not a single entity. It is made up of many different groups and individuals, each with their own interests and goals. This diversity of interests and goals is a source of both strength and conflict. The eighth point is that the world is not a simple system. It is a complex web of interactions and relationships, and it is difficult to understand or predict its behavior. The ninth point is that the world is not a neutral space. It is a place where power is exercised, and where different groups and individuals are vying for control. The tenth point is that the world is not a single story. It is a place where many different stories are being told, and where these stories are often in conflict with each other.